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Welcome

Welcome to the Western Washington Highway 20 project update e-mail list. This is your first e-mail update about highway improvements on Highway 20 from Coupeville on Whidbey Island to the Cascades. Over the next seven years we will complete 13 projects worth \$160 million to improve safety, increase traffic flow and relieve congestion.

In this edition, you'll find information about our summer highway construction on Whidbey Island and our recently completed project between Newhalem and Diablo. Future editions will include information about upcoming projects elsewhere on Highway 20.

We plan to send these e-mail updates at least once a month. We may send them more often, but only if we have important or time-sensitive news to tell you. You can expect to receive these messages as frequently as once a week during the summer and fall construction season. You can remove yourself from this e-mail list or invite your friends to subscribe anytime by visiting our [e-mail updates Web page](#).

How will construction affect Highway 20 traffic this summer?

We will work hard to keep traffic moving during construction. Drivers should look for major construction work on Highway 20 north of Oak Harbor near Ducken Road from May 8 through the first week of July. Two-way traffic will be maintained, but due to the nature of the work, drivers should expect some delays. Crews are currently working Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

There may be up to four nights of total Highway 20 closures during construction. We will schedule these closures when traffic is lightest, between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. Sundays through Thursdays, and will do everything we can to avoid and minimize the highway closures.

Traffic delays through the work zone should be minor after we finish lowering the hill near Ducken Road.

We need your help. Please:

- plan your trips before you go
- read these e-mail updates and share them with friends
- check for updates on our Web site or by calling 5-1-1
- share the ride: carpool, vanpool or ride the bus
- allow extra time

Watch for construction on Whidbey Island this summer

Earlier this year we completed work on the North Cascades Pass to reduce the risk of rock slides; now we turn our attention to projects north of Oak Harbor on Whidbey Island. Crews will be working on much needed safety improvements in Island County where traffic increased by 17 percent on state highways between 1996 and 2004 as the population grew by approximately 7,000. We already finished our first construction project on Whidbey Island this winter when we stabilized steep rock faces at Deception Pass. Our next two Highway 20 improvement projects, currently under construction, are Monkey Hill Road to Troxell Road and Troxell Road to Cornet Bay Road

Crews wrap up Monkey Hill to Troxell Road construction

In October 2005, WSDOT began work to improve intersections and sight distance, and to reduce the risk of collisions on Highway 20 north of Oak Harbor between [Monkey Hill Road and Troxell Road](#). Due to dry weather conditions on the Island, crews were able to continue work through the winter, which is normally the off-season for construction. They finished paving and will apply permanent paint striping shortly. We will return in the fall to plant shrubs and trees.

Safety work begins between Troxell Road and Cornet Bay Road

This spring, crews began work to [improve the area near Ducken Road](#). Over the last five years there have been 51 collisions in this area; 42 were rear-end collisions. The first order of business is to cut down the hill near Ducken Road by nine feet to improve sight distance. We will also align Ducken Road with Deception Circle, add turn lanes and add a bus turnout for both east and westbound Highway 20 traffic.

We will do the hardest work first. There will be lots of construction activity in this area and drivers should expect delays. Crews will maintain two-way traffic by shifting traffic to one side of the highway while excavating the other side. Once excavation is complete, we will pave the lowered section and move traffic onto it so we can excavate the other side. This process could take anywhere from one month to two months to complete.

Once the road is lowered, crews will widen the lanes and shoulders. This work will require lane-shifts, but drivers should experience only minor delays. This project will wrap up in the fall when we plant trees and shrubs.

New rock catching ditch protects drivers on the Cascade Pass

For the first time since November 2003, WSDOT opened both lanes of Highway 20 east of Newhalem on Friday, Feb. 17. A massive rock slide destroyed SR 20 and left the hillside above the highway extremely unstable and blocked access to the town of Diablo. WSDOT and its contractor Wilder Construction put down the final layer of asphalt on the highway and installed guardrail in April, completing the \$11 million [rock catching ditch](#) just weeks before the pass was cleared of snow and reopened to traffic. The ditch will help protect the road and drivers from the unstable hillside above.

Crews removed upwards of 400,000 tons of rock and debris from the hillside. That's enough rock to fill a standard football field 56 feet high (almost six stories). Each dump truck carried roughly 27 tons of rock. At 27 tons per trip, it took approximately 14,815 dump truck loads. If you lined up each 55-foot long truck, you would have a line of trucks 154 miles long; enough trucks to stretch single file from Tacoma to Canada on I-5.